Opinion Pieces; Ford government plans 66 electronic billboards on Metrolinx rail lands, March 11

The Toronto Star

March 15, 2020 Sunday

Copyright 2020 Toronto Star Newspapers Limited

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A16

Length: 728 words

Body

Calling virus a hoax is Trump's most dangerous lie so far

I am heartened to hear that finally attention is being paid to the potentially lethal COVID-19 problem.

U.S. President Donald Trump calling the novel coronavirus a hoax created by the media is the most dangerous and irresponsible lie he's told so far. Because of a lack of testing and support, nobody has an accurate count of the outbreak in that country.

Thousands cross our border daily unchecked, and as a senior this really worries me.

Vivien C. Buckley, Burlington

It will take years to recover from damage done by Ford

Ford government plans 66 electronic billboards on Metrolinx rail lands, March 11

While the rest of us and our leaders are at work dealing with COVID-19, Ontario Premier Doug Ford is planning 66 electronic billboards for ready money. It's clear he never pretended to know what's best for our kids who can't vote nor, for the ones who did.

Think of the growing list of incompetencies - autism funding, licence plates, non-sticking stickers, education. It's not funny anymore.

These billboards are bad timing, to say the least. At worst, it's a clear sign of where his priorities are focused. It's time voters face the reality as teachers, health care workers and patients of all ages have. Mr. Ford is not a one-term wonder - he must become a one-term blunder.

Let us begin to pick up the pieces now. The damage to our society will take years to recover.

Don Graves, Burlington

Premier needs to get

his priorities straight

Of all the things that Doug Ford, the leader of our provincial government, is broken-hearted about it's licence plates. To have wasted such time and money on licence plates which required no change when there are more pressing concerns with which this government needs to be concerned - COVID-19 pandemic, health care, education, the environment, legal aid, minimum wage, labour standards to name a few - demonstrates a lack of judgment.

Get your priorities straight, man.

Norah Downey, Midland, Ont.

Don't let deniers frame way we talk about climate crisis

Unconscionable dithering on climate action and on Indigenous rights has caused immense and wholly needless pain, conflict and disruption for Canadians in recent weeks.

It's 2020; scientists say we absolutely must transition to safe energy as quickly as humanly possible, just to give humanity a decent chance at a future (not to guarantee a livable future, which is already out of reach).

Despite this, multiple levels of government, and three different self-styled progressive parties, are prepared to trample the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), to force through yet another pipeline on behalf of brazen and unrepentant fossil fuel profiteers.

All in the middle of a climate crisis.

Worse yet, in a flailing attempt to shore up their transparently myopic stance, fossil interests, and their allies in politics and the media, are blasting out vicious invective to confuse and divide Canadians, with a wilful and criminal disregard for any resulting violence. We need look no further than recent propaganda from fossil fuel companies and their allies, including endorsements of sexual violence against teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg, and acts of brutal physical violence against earth protectors.

Moreover, this petro-cabal has gleefully spread outright fabrications to vilify Indigenous protectors and their allies, such as claims of "paid protestors" and epithets like "thug."

The fossil industry pours huge amounts of cash and effort into convincing the public that "energy" means only fossil fuels, that "jobs" must be fossil fuel jobs, that safe alternatives do not exist, and that regular folks acting out of concern for their children and the planet are funded by foreign interests, hell-bent on destroying all that is good in the world.

We do not need to argue that this is a grossly irresponsible invitation to violence; we can point to several examples where earth protectors, merely repeating science and/or defending UNDRIP, have been threatened, intimidated and attacked by people who have been made angry and confused by fossil propaganda, specifically designed to make us angry, confused and divided.

It's time that the industry, politicians and the media renounce this dangerous disinformation.

The future of all life on earth depends on it.

Patrick Yancey, Antigonish, Nova Scotia

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: COLUMN

Publication-Type: NEWSPAPER

Subject: COVID CORONAVIRUS (90%); COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS (90%); ELECTIONS & POLITICS (90%); GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (90%); INFECTIOUS DISEASE (90%); CORONAVIRUSES (78%);

EPIDEMICS (78%); NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS (78%); PANDEMICS (78%); VIRUSES (78%); WAGES & SALARIES (78%); INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (77%); REPORTS, REVIEWS & SECTIONS (74%); REGIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (72%); EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION EMPLOYEES (71%); CLIMATE CHANGE (66%); COMPENSATION & BENEFITS (65%); HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS (65%); MINIMUM WAGE (65%); CLIMATE ACTION (60%); UNITED NATIONS (60%); EDITORIALS & OPINIONS (59%); AUTISM (52%); SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (50%)

Industry: HEALTH CARE (70%); ENERGY & UTILITIES (65%); HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS (65%); FOSSIL FUELS (60%)

Person: DONALD TRUMP (79%)

Geographic: ONTARIO, CANADA (73%); CANADA (79%); UNITED STATES (79%)

Load-Date: March 15, 2020

End of Document